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Accelerate is a collaborative pilot project of the non-profit Regional Development Corporation that has been funded by the US Department of Energy/Office of Environmental Management for five consecutive years and carried out on six college campuses in northern New Mexico.



# NM Lacks Skilled Workers to Fill the Technical Workforce Pipeline

- Higher Education students can't get through **remedial math requirements**
- Life issues get in the way of finishing college and **graduation rates remain low**
- Graduating students **lack basic career skills and professional experience**

**Resulting in -> Technical positions that go unfilled**

***accelerate*** is a new infrastructure, not a curriculum, assisting educational programs to work more effectively with transitional workers and non-traditional students in the STEM pipeline and prepare them for jobs.



# Program components established to overcome specific barriers

Inability to get through remedial math requirements in a timely manner



**Accelerate Math Experience**

Life issues get in the way of finishing college



**Dedicated Pro-Active Advisors who establish one-on-one relationships**

First in family to go to college and students retraining lack relevant soft skills



**Career Readiness Training and Events**

Students lack relevant experience in their field of study and must earn money while in college



**Stipends for attending career readiness training, networking events, & internships**



***accelerate***  
Technical Training and Job Placement



 **REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
CORPORATION**

# Overview

## Remedial Math Classes

- Professional development for math instructors
- Dedicated Tutors
- Online curriculum supplemented by instructor lectures/assistance
- Robots lab to show how math is applied

## Pro-Active Advisors

- Establish one-on-one relationships to advise, mentor, and coach students
- In surveys, Accelerate students deemed it as most valuable part of the program
- Responsible for developing career readiness training and establishing internships

## Career Readiness Training/ Practice ,Professional Development, Internships

- Series of career readiness workshops and classes
- “All-school” networking events/professional development events
- “All-school practice session (mock interviews, resume review, elevator pitch)
- Internships

## Stipends

- Paid for participation in career readiness and professional development events and internships
- Appreciated, but not ranked as highly by students as other components

# Outcomes

- 851 students served over 5 years
- Average age 28
- 78% non-white, all non-traditional
- Math program
  - deemed only remedial math program in country to close the achievement gap of non-traditional students (women & Hispanics fared equally well with their white counterparts.)
  - pass rates 2013-2015 – 82%, 84% and 96%
- 20 percentage point increase in persistence, graduation, and transfer rates
- 40% of Accelerate interns offered employment by employers they interned with

# Conclusions

- Program in place for 5 years and already supported by Higher Education
- Discussions taking place with LANL, National and Regional Foundations and Federal entities for continuing and expanding program
- Pro-active advising and the establishment of relationships with students is critical
- Career readiness/soft skills training should take place while students are in school
- Collaboration across colleges should be encouraged and continue
- Colleges should enhance Interaction/contact with regional employers
- Internships are a valuable form of career/soft skills training and should be encouraged